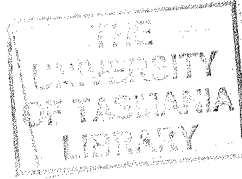


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FREDERICK MAITLAND INNES -

A STUDY IN LIBERAL CONSERVATISM.

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Syntax and punctuation are frequently inaccurate in many quotations of F.M. Innes, but all statements have been reproduced as printed in the primary sources.

CHAPTER I

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 1816-1882.

Deeds, words, thoughts, probably in that order of importance, are the common means by which a man may influence his contemporaries and their affairs. A powerful orator, Frederick Maitland Innes as editor, lecturer, lay preacher, Colonial Treasurer and sometimes Premier, had both the potential and opportunity to leave a lasting imprint in politics, press and society. Most men are a complex study in relation to their influence on the world about them - but if the usual complexity could be reduced to the simplicity of two factors, the capacity of this man to influence would lie in his words and the man behind them.

As a journalist Innes was renowned for his liberal views on education, prison reform and government, yet even in 1838 he pronounced himself 'favourable to moderate principles, and constitutional safety', warning that in England 'particular claims must be suspended, or else from their accumulative force, in the hands of the democratic party, sensational changes must be incurred...'¹ As a politician he believed in the necessity of a conservative attitude, indeed it 'was impossible for any reflective man to be other than conservative'.² But throughout his political career he maintained some elements of his liberal belief, especially in education.

1. Tasmanian, 4.5.1838.

2. The Mercury, 30.8.1860.

Innes always admired the art of compromise, for he considered it 'nearly impossible that any one individual can possess exactly the right notions on its various political and local interests, since different experiences are requisite to their acquisition.'³ Consequently as Premier Innes formed a 'Ministry of All the Talents'; as, like Burke's Chatham, 'he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so various inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white... that it was indeed a very curious show ...'⁴ In this compromising attitude lay Innes' chance to use his unquestioned talent for words to weld into a cohesive philosophy the various ideas and beliefs expressed by the inexperienced and for the most part inept politicians of his world, even the fulfilment of his own definition of civilization - 'all that the heart and mind can give to the union of men in society, and the summary of all that is good in social improvement, religious and political, moral and intellectual'.⁵

Frederick Maitland Innes was born at Roxburgh, Scotland, on August 11th 1816, his father, an English Army officer had died shortly before,

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3. Tasmanian, 20.4.1838.
 4. Burke E, American Taxation; Select Works of E. Burke, ed. E.J. Payne. Vol. I. p. 145.
 5. Launceston Examiner, 16.6.1847. 'The Importance of the Cultivation of a Knowledge of General Literature in Connection with the Circumstances of Colonial Committees.' (A lecture to the Mechanics' Institution).
 6. The Mercury, 13.5.1882.

and so his uncle, James Innes, became the boy's legal guardian. When Innes left school he entered the office of his uncle, who was a Writer to the Signet and manager of the estates of his cousin, Duke of Roxburgh. This life, lacking the adventure and apparent glamour of war, soon palled, and in 1834 Innes ran away to Spain, where England was supporting the Liberals under Isabella, against the Absolutists (led by Don Carlos, the disinherited nephew of Ferdinand VII). James Innes, persuaded the Duke into demanding Frederick's return to Scotland, and the would-be soldier remained for two more years on the ducal estates. But in 1836 Innes and a friend, Captain James Reid Scott, embarked from London on the bark, 'Derwent', arriving in Van Diemen's Land on February 4th the following year.

Soon afterwards Innes became a reporter for the Hobart Town Courier, though he later implied he was its editor. He seems to have been one of the instigators in reviving the Mechanics Institution, as an advertisement in an April edition of the Courier asks all those interested in founding a Tasmanian Literary and Scientific Institution to leave their names at the Courier office, and the following week Innes' signature authorised an announcement of a Mechanics Institution meeting. Through this society Innes expounded his ideas on education, especially post school

7. Hobart Town Courier, 10.2.1837.

8. Launceston Examiner, 24.4.1850. '... connected with the Courier, and not as sub-editor, unless the contribution of leading articles be the work of a sub-editor.'

9. Hobart Town Courier, 14.4.1837.

education. He was peculiarly aware of the value of knowledge as he himself had had no formal instruction after leaving school.

From the Courier Innes transferred to The Tasmanian which had formerly been incorporated in Murray's Review. The paper's motto, 'Open to all - influenced by none,' was a sentiment that appealed to the new editor, who dourly announced, 'We forbear at present and altogether, offering any superfluous introduction to our labours; - suffice that we are resolved by an honest and earnest discharge of the duties devolving upon us, to merit public confidence and support.'¹¹

The same year, 1838, Innes married Sarah Elizabeth Grey, the youngest child of Humphrey Grey, a prosperous free settler who had emigrated from Ireland in 1826.¹² They were married at Roscomroe, the Grey family home near Avoca, and the bride's father promised his daughter and Evandale property then known as Mona Vale. Innes resigned from the Tasmanian in 1839 to return to England, and his wife followed a few months later. It was generally assumed that Innes went to solicit an official colonial appointment,¹³ although his mother's illness and

10. The Observer, 1.10.1846. '... it is at the age when a youth leaves school that the mind is usually at its turning point for future weal or woe.'

11. Tasmanian, 6.4.1838.

12. Dougherty, K.H., A Story of a Pioneer Family in Van Diemen's Land, passim. Tasmanian, 31.7.1838.

13. The Mercury, 13.5.1882.

Captain Alexander Maconochie's proposed system of prison reform¹⁴
 probably influenced his decision. Many years later Innes himself¹⁵
 mentions a mission on behalf of the Presbyterian Church.

While in England Innes published a comprehensive pamphlet on prison¹⁶
 discipline, and also became Secretary to the British and Foreign Aborigines'¹⁷
 Protection Society. Neither before or after does he seem to have been
 concerned with the welfare of aborigines, but it is perhaps possible that
 the appointment was connected with his later allusion to his mission from
 the Presbyterian Church. Alternatively, his association in England
 with other prison reformers may have provoked Innes to extend his human-
 itarianism beyond the specific problem of convicts.

Before returning to Van Diemen's Land Innes and his wife visited
 many relatives, including a cousin of Elizabeth's, a John Quain. He was
 favourably impressed with Innes since he was 'without any of that harsh-
 ness which is apt to repel in the Scottish character ... he is, indeed,
 a very superior young man ... a man of much reading and very extensive
 information ...'¹⁸ The Innes family (2 boys, the eldest of what was to

14. West, J., History of Tasmania, Vol. II. p. 291.

15. The Mercury, 28.9.1878.

16. Innes, F.M., Secondary Punishments. The Merits of a Home and of a
 Colonial Process of a Social and of a Separate System, of Convict
 Management Discussed.

17. Aborigines' Protection Society Publication, London 1841.

18. Dougherty, K.H., op.cit., p.54.

be a family of 7 sons and 5 daughters, had been born during the stay in England) sailing on the 'Mandarin', arrived at Hobart Town in October 1843. For the duration of the voyage Innes was superintendent of a group of Parkhurst boys who were being transported to Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand.

Innes resumed his journalist career and again worked for the Courier, and he may also have been the Hobart Town correspondent for the Launceston Examiner at this time. In 1845 he became editor of a new paper, The Observer, of which the Examiner said 'rose and fell under his auspices.' The paper's principles were announced in the opening issue - advocating free trade and independence in political affairs; the general policy was 'Quid verum, atque decens, curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.'

Either from 1843 to 1845, or from 1847 to 1850 Innes became a lay preacher with the Presbyterian Church. He moved to Launceston after resigning from the Observer in 1848, and joined the staff on the Cornwall

19. Hobart Town Courier, 20.10.1843.

20. Launceston Examiner, 24.4.1850

21. Ibid, 17.4.1850. This seems the most probable time; the alternative being the months between his resignation from the Observer and transfer to Launceston in 1846.

22. The Observer, 5.6.1845. 'That which is true and proper, I care for and demand, and I am wholly concerned with this.'

23. The Mercury, 20.9.1858. Ibid, 13.5.1882.

Chronicle. He continued to take an interest in Mechanics' Institutions, giving his first lecture to the Northern society in November 1846, on
²⁴
 'The Advantages of the Diffusion of Knowledge.' Early in 1850 Innes wrote to the Colonial Secretary's Office on behalf of the shareholders of the Launceston Water Company for information on pipes and other materials and
²⁵
 also Major Cotton's estimate of such a scheme. But he does not seem to have taken an active part in the company, apart from the initial correspond-
²⁶
 ence, in which he signs himself as 'Convener of Committee of Shareholders.'

Before leaving the Chronicle Innes had a short but stormy term as co-editor with D'Arcy Wentworth Murray. The venture was not a success.
²⁷
 News of the partnership was greeted with hoots of derision by the Examiner, and it was not four months before mutual allegations over financial arrangements were rife. In the course of the ensuing innuendoes which the Examiner obligingly printed, Murray claimed that Innes had tried to become
²⁸
 sole editor, as 'it would be a means of restoring his broken fortune.' This charge was never substantiated and it seems unlikely that Innes had any fortune to restore at this stage. Murray withdrew in July, and

24. Launceston Examiner, 4.11.1846.

25. In 1842 Major Henry Cotton had been appointed a member of the Board to report on the water supply for Hobart and Launceston. On his arrival from India in 1842 he had had 25 years' experience in irrigation work there. He was Director of the Hobart and Launceston Waterworks in 1847-8.

26. C.S.O. 24/164/4161.

27. Launceston Examiner, 17.4.1850

28. Cornwall Chronicle, 10.8.1850.

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and paid the Examiner to print for the next month that 'I do hereby caution all persons from paying to Mr. Fred Maitland Innes, any monies on account of the "Cornwall Chronicle" ...'

Innes gave an almost identical warning about Murray, but refused to give a full explanation of the dispute, since it would 'occupy longer space than I can afford to pay for.'³⁰ In August Murray accused Innes of having had an argument with the paper's owner (W.L. Goodwin, who was Murray's father-in-law) and of removing the account books. Innes declared he was prepared 'even now to submit to unconditional arbitration.'³¹ But Goodwin accused Innes of avoiding the solution he proposed 'that the account books should be placed in the hands of a competent accountant, who should make them up correctly - collect the monies due - pay the creditors, and divide the balance equally between the partners.'³²

Having resigned, or being forced to resign, Innes and his family retired to Mona Vale, the Evendale property of some 761 acres, which Humphrey Grey had sold to his daughter for 10/- in 1847, in token of a promise made at her marriage. Renaming the property 'Woodmount', Innes lived here for six years in comparative obscurity. He gave no lectures to the Mechanics' Institution after 1850 and if he exhibited at the Agricultural Society meetings, it was not with any success; in 1853

29. Launceston Examiner, 31.7.1850.

30. Ibid., 7.8.1850.

31. Ibid., 7.8.1850.

32. Cornwall Chronicle, 10.8.1850.

33

he is reported as having one convict labourer - a carpenter.

From 1846 to 1856 Innes changed from a competent well-known journalist to a farmer who seems to have taken no interest in public affairs. When electorates nominated candidates in 1856, Innes was asked to stand only after several proposed nominees had withdrawn.³⁴ In May the Examiner mentioned several likely people, but did not include³⁵ Innes. Earlier that year Innes had been appointed a J.P. and a Coroner,³⁶ otherwise the retreat to 'Woodmount' seems to have been a vacuum in Innes' life.

Having accepted the somewhat dubious honour, Innes was elected unopposed to the House of Assembly as the member for Morven. He declined to commit himself to any particular policy, apart from retrenchment in government expenditure and increased outlay for education. He would act independently because he 'knew no party in the embryo legislature.'³⁷ At the age of 40, Frederick Maitland Innes prepared to enter Parliament. Here was the opportunity to effect the theories he had expounded so willingly as a journalist. 'The day is past for neutrality; every man owes it to himself³⁸ and his country to take a part in the concerns of public life.'

33. Launceston Examiner, 5.5.1853. 'Return of names and residences of hirers of convicts with number and description, and rate of wages from 30.6.1852 to 1.1.1853.'

34. Ibid., 4.9.1856.

35. Ibid., 8.5.1856.

36. Hobart Town Gazette, 1.4.1856.

37. Launceston Examiner, 9.9.1856.

38. The Observer, 15.8.1845.

The practice of self government in Tasmania began in December 1856 with Innes seated on the Opposition benches, but within five months he became Tasmania's Colonial Treasurer. He had moved a no confidence motion against the Gregson ministry, in April, but such an uproar arose that Innes, followed by eleven of his colleagues, withdrew from the House. Three weeks later he was officially named as Colonial Treasurer under Premier Weston. Innes remained Treasurer until November 1862, although the composition of the Ministry altered several times during that period.⁴¹ The Courier welcomed the promotion of their former sub-editor, 'During his Parliamentary career he has been distinguished for his abilities and moral courage, and if he brings the same application to bear on his new office which he has bestowed upon his Parliamentary duties, he will become a most valuable public servant.'⁴² The parliamentary career consisted of an unopposed election and a five months session with a Christmas adjournment and two changes of government, so this praise seems excessive.⁴³ The Daily News was more blunt with its sneer at 'Mr. Innes' lust for place.'

It was, however, the private finances of Innes which monopolised public attention in 1858. In the course of the budget debate, Innes had

39. Gregson had replaced Champ in February.

40. Hobart Town Courier, 4.4.1857. '...Chapman, Smith, Champ, Rogers, Allison, Gibson, Balfe, Weston, Butler, Henty, Nutt.'

41. See Appendix A.

42. Hobart Town Courier, 24.4.1857.

43. Tasmanian Daily News, 24.4.1857.

accused John Davies, editor of the Mercury, of evading certain newspaper duties some years previously, and allegations of fraud were implied. Davies was not without friends, nor Innes without enemies, and the Treasurer's lustre was somewhat dimmed with the public revelation of the Pooler affair.

It is difficult to reconstruct and assess the facts accurately, because of the absence of factual proof in the Registry of Deeds, the exaggerated newspaper reports and the Spartan reticence of the villain, the accused - the Hon. Frederick Maitland Innes. John Pooler, a prosperous Longford landowner and merchant, had died in 1854, appointing as trustees of his estate Adye Douglas, Innes and John Thompson. Under the terms of the will all Pooler's estate in Great Britain and Ireland went to his brother, his books to a sister, and the 'rest and residue to trustees on trust for conversion', the interest of the proceeds to go to his mother and sisters for life, and on their deaths to his brother.⁴⁴

Innes and Thompson were popularly believed to have kept the proceeds from the sale of the estate - estimated by their detractors to be in the vicinity of £25,000. It was claimed that Douglas had withdrawn from the trusteeship, that Innes and Thompson had bought part of the estate themselves from the general proceeds, that Innes owed Pooler £300 at the latter's death, and that Innes had been 'sued repeatedly, and conjointly with Mr. Thompson, as the two executors to J. Pooler's estate,

44. Will No. 3/284; registered 26.6.1854. Registry of Deeds, Hobart.

45

by Messrs. Gleadow & Co.' Innes said nothing, and although there were constant aspersions cast on his financial integrity for many years after, he never publicly made any statement on the matter.

Neither Pooler nor the most persistent accuser, Drury, had unblemish-⁴⁶ed careers nor is there any record of Innes buying part of Pooler's Estate; although his father-in-law transacted several purchases. Adye Douglas signed all the transactions and there is no record of any case being brought against Innes by Gleadow & Co. The climax came with Mercury headlines,

'Pooler's Estate', claiming that the paper had two letters signed by Innes which would prove his guilt; the letters were to be printed the following week, but they never appeared. Why not? There was no love lost between Davies and Innes, and many suggested bribery.

Be that as it may, the Innes household finances were always a little suspect. Innes left his wife's farm soon after entering politics and moved his family to Hobart. He had no known source of income apart from paid parliamentary offices he occupied during his political career. His wife may have had an inheritance from her father, and possibly received the proceeds from the sale of 'Woodmount'. Certainly Humphrey Grey does not appear to have appreciated Innes' financial ability, the rent from a small Longford property was to go to Sarah Elizabeth Innes for her 'sole and separate use free from the debts control or enjoyments of

45. The Mercury, 21.9.1858. Ibid., 9.10.1858. Ibid., 13.10.1858.

46. Land Titles concerned with Pooler's Estate:
 4/448; 4/532; 4/702; 4/724; 4/760; 4/772; 4/785; 4/886; 4/1420; 4/1421;
 4/1422; 4/1424; 4/1460; 4/1678; 4/2083; 4/3602. Registry of Deeds,
 Hobart.

her present or any future husband.⁴⁷ In Hobart the family first lived at "Cottage Green" and then leased Newlands,⁴⁸ from where the boys attended the Hobart High School (then a non-government school), and a tutor instructed the girls at home. When the Duke of Roxburgh died, the family loving cup and the Innes Book were bequeathed to Innes, and there may also have been a legacy. At his death Innes, who died intestate, had less than £200 in the bank and life policies worth £500.

In 1859 the Mercury charged that the colony was in the hands of four men, 'Messrs. Francis Smith, W.P. Weston, W. Henty, and F.M. Innes.'⁴⁹ Four days later the government was reportedly a triumvirate, Weston having been excluded. By September the triumvirs were firmly entrenched and were parodied by Charles Meredith as "Needy, Seedy and Greedy" - "Needy" being applied to Innes, a reference to Pooler? But the Innes incident of 1859 occurred over his surprise move, in an almost empty House, for a new minister - of Lands and Works. The idea showed foresight and commonsense, the manner of the proposal was moronic, since he had not even consulted Government members on his plan. As a result there was no official Minister for Lands and Works until 1869,⁵⁰ as Innes had aroused such hostility and suspicion in not consulting his own ministry, and in

47. Land Title 4/3626.

48. Dougherty K.H., op.cit., p. 80. '... lovely stone house surrounded by 32 acres of garden, lawn, shrubbery and orchard.'

49. The Mercury, 6.8.1859.

50. H. Butler, 27.10.1869.

using a time when more than half the members were absent.

Since entering Parliament Innes had taken on increased responsibilities which provoked the following editorial.

'Who is your Treasurer ? F.M. Innes; who is leader of the government in the Assembly ? F.M. Innes; who is the Chairman of your Education Board? F.M. Innes; who manages your Immigration matters ? F.M. Innes; who is your Postmaster General ? F.M. Innes; who is your "Minister" of Public Works ? F.M. Innes; who is your acting Colonial Secretary ?
51
F.M. Innes.'

Innes was re-elected for Morven in the 1861 elections but spoke with blithe indifference to the result of the 1862 voting, since he 'cared not one straw, for he was perfectly indifferent as any member of the House could be as to the precise elements of which the ministry would
52
be formed.' However he decided not to contest the election, but to enter the Legislative Council as the Member for Campbell Town. He never gave any reason for this move, but the Ministry was very unpopular because of the continued economic distress, and his chances of winning a contested seat were slight; he may also have thought that he would strengthen the Ministry's power by entering the Council, and by some happy chance for Innes, the Campbell Town seat was vacant.

When Parliament reopened in June 1863, Innes, renowned for his private library, was appointed to the Library Committee of the Council, a position which he held for a number of years. In 1864 he was chosen

51. Hobart Town Advertiser, 14.11.1860.

52. The Mercury, 12.10.1862.

as Chairman of Committees, an important office because it was customary for the Chairman to become the next President of the Council, and Innes was elected President in 1868.

The Wilson Ministry resigned in November 1872, and when others declined to form a new Administration, Governor Du Cane summoned Innes, who accepted the offer after 24 hours' consideration. It meant an alliance with old enemies such as Meredith, with whom Innes had rarely, if ever, agreed on any issue. Consequently the coalition was suspect from the start. The Mercury sneered, 'Politics in Tasmania have evidently become a question not of principle, but of pay.'⁵³ There was speculation as to whether 'mind' (Innes) or 'matter' (Meredith) would predominate. Innes resumed the position of Treasurer and entered the House of Assembly as the member for Selby. To Charles Leake he explained that he 'could not decline the post if I accepted any office, which I could not have refrained from a decided opposition to the financial policy which Mr.⁵⁴ Chapman had announced.'

The coalition lasted less than a year. Innes tried to appease the⁵⁵ Opposition by withdrawing all his controversial financial measures, except that of the railway rate, but this only made the fall of the Ministry inevitable. In his resignation speech Innes defended his actions on the grounds that the financial stress was not of his making. This was

53. The Mercury, 5.11.72.

54. Innes to Charles Leake, 2.11.1872.

55. The Mercury, 31.7.1873.

irrelevant. The point was that Innes had accepted office in order to relieve the stress, and had failed to do so.

The Kennerly administration took office, and Innes became leader of the Opposition. But in 1875 Innes crossed the floor to replace Philip Fysh as Colonial Treasurer, though Fysh still remained in the ministry.⁵⁶ Innes had earlier announced his intention of retiring from politics at the end of the current session, but he now told his new electorate of North Launceston that 'it must be evident to anyone who will review the composition of Parliament, the strength of parties, and the futile labours of the last two sessions, together with any chance of material changes in these respects by a dissolution, that no moderate and equitable adjustment of public difficulty is likely to be reached unless by mutual concessions, and the suspension of party rancor.'⁵⁷ The electors were not overwhelmingly impressed, Innes won the seat by seven votes. The Mercury mocked, 'Mr. Innes, who chilled by the cold shades of the Opposition Benches, and disheartened by the powerlessness of his position, has cruelly abandoned his helpless and hopeless followers, and leaving them without rudder or sheet anchor, has betaken himself to the more sunny shores of the Treasury benches...'⁵⁸

Spelling bees were all the rage in 1875, and this inspired one

56. 13.3.1875.

57. The Mercury, 9.10.1873.

58. Launceston Examiner, 15.3.1875.

59. The Mercury, 28.7.1875.

elector to ^{WRITE} ~~satirise~~ ^{SATIRICAL} a fictional parliamentary match from which Innes did not emerge unscathed. 'The Colonial Treasurer next presented himself with a serene front. He spelt "salary" with much unction, and also "gyroscope", but seemed very undecided about the word "taxation" and so had to retire'.
60

But even Innes could not save Kennerly's Ministry and by 1876, he was once more among the Opposition while Reibey led the Government. Innes did not intend to contest the 1877 elections, but was finally persuaded to do so. He had been in ill health for some months and did not take an active part in the campaign, unfortunately neither did his persuaders. Innes lost the North Launceston seat by 131 votes, although almost half the electorate did not vote.

In September, however, Innes was sworn in as M.L.C. for South Esk and in 1878 became President of the Council. Despite constant ill health he attended every session he could. After his re-election for South Esk in 1879, he rose from his bed 'because it was his duty to assist in promoting the passage of the provisions for the public service and other necessary disbursements. He was quite aware that men who entered public life must of necessity sacrifice themselves more or less to their duties and to the promotion of the public interests...'
61
1882, Innes was still representing South Esk and ^{was} President of the Legislative Council.

60. The Mercury, 24.9.1875.

61. Ibid. 18.9.79.

CHAPTER II

THE LIBERAL JOURNALIST 1837-1850

Education and prison reform were the two subjects to which Frederick Maitland Innes devoted most of his time and talent as a journalist. His lecture to the Mechanics Institution at the end of 1837 on 'The Advantages of a Popular Diffusion of Knowledge' was so successful that it was printed as a pamphlet by the proprietor of the Courier.¹ Innes believed that colonial societies should take a special interest in education for 'new colonies embrace in their population many who have risen and are rising into stations in which they are made to exert a powerful influence over the interests and characters of those around them, 'therefore it was urgent that where circumstances operated peculiarly, to raise the position of the individual, machinery should be in operation to qualify them beneficially,² and with satisfaction to themselves.'³

As early as 1838 he was advocating a Colonial University, which would amongst other things 'by affording a provision for learned appetite and curiosity, induce a Colonial literature, exempt from the prejudices and principles, inappropriate to our social circumstances and character,

1. Hobart Town Courier, 8.12.1837. '... a demand for between one and two hundred copies having been made.'
2. Presumably Innes meant 'beneficially'.
3. Tasmanian Pamphlets, XII.

but which are so apt to gain an ascendancy, from a dependency on for
foreign cultivation for our leading minds and writers.⁴ Since the
colony did not have historical traditions and influences he held that
'not only in relation to politics, but to religion and other things,
principles are in a state of chaos; and from this a satisfactory escape
cannot be made unless the lights of knowledge are shed upon men's minds -
unless there are active agencies of instruction at work.'⁵ Although Innes
did not live to see a Colonial University, he was instrumental in found-
ing the Tasmanian Associate of Arts, which awarded scholarships to
Cambridge and Oxford to successful candidates.

Throughout his life Innes never deviated from the belief that
knowledge is 'the necessity of our species, and man is not properly
himself in the system of things to which he belongs without it.'⁶ Mere
brawn and technique were not enough, for the colonists were 'in danger
of wanting in depth, refinement, richness, compass - soul - in the character
of their intelligence ...'⁷ Moreover, the educated few had a duty to
adhere to their newly discovered opinions and not submit to any pressure

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4. Tasmanian, 10.7.1838. 'The Importance of Collegiate Institutions for the future Interests of Van Diemen's Land.' (lecture to the Mechanics Institution).
 5. Launceston Examiner, 4.11.1846. 'The Advantages of the Diffusion of Knowledge' (lecture to the Mechanics Institution).
 6. Ibid., 16.6.1847.
 7. Ibid., 16.6.1847.

8

exerted by the prejudices and indifference of the unenlightened.

Sir John Franklin's proposed Education Board was criticised by Innes⁹ as 'ponderous and impracticable,' but he wanted it implemented if only to prove its weaknesses. He was pleased that the Government realised its obligation to 'remedy the deficiency of an intellectual craving in the beginning, by providing seminaries which will stimulate while they supply, a demand for what they hold out.'¹⁰ Innes advocated the Board as a temporary provision which would 'assist and protect the Educational interests of the Colony, and that without a delay which will involve the question in difficulties greater than can at present attach to it.'¹¹

12

Innes opposed 'non-intervention principles in relation to Education', and bitterly attacked sectarian teaching in government schools - 'A public school ought to be exempt from everything narrow or sectarian'.¹³ He thought the failure of the 1838 Church and School Act inevitable because of the predominance of the Church of England, which although not the established church was still the strongest. Innes again praised the government for its good intentions, laying the blame on the churches, especially that of England, for the failure of the scheme. He suggested

8. Cornwall Chronicle, 5.6.1850. 'On the Obligations entailed by the Possession of Knowledge'. (lecture to the Mechanics Institution).

9. Tasmanian, 5.10.1838.

10. Ibid, 5.10.1838.

11. Ibid, 5.10.1838.

12. Ibid, 5.10.1838.

13. Tasmanian, 21.12.1838.

the Act should be abrogated and replaced by one 'with every denomination¹⁴ of Christians having the same status.'

Innes was not bigoted, and had opposed the practical exclusion of Roman Catholics from the Education Board, (the Catholics later withdrew altogether). The Board was to consist of two Episcopalians, two Presbyterians and one 'non-descript' (~~13~~ the Colonial Secretary, the Sheriff, the Solicitor-General, and M'Lachlan and Captain Swanston - two of colony's Bank Directors). 'Does our ecclesiastical arrangement¹⁵ not render the three churches equal ...?' In 1845 Innes again pleaded for tolerance, at least in education - the Education Board should continue if only because it provided the 'best security to the public¹⁶ against the introduction of sectarian principles into the schools.'

The Transportation problem was possibly the most controversial question of the day when Innes arrived in the colony, and on becoming editor of the Tasmanian he found himself in the midst of the Maconochie furore. Alexander Maconochie had come to Van Diemen's Land as Sir John Franklin's secretary in 1837, and he had sent to England a detailed report on the convict situation in the colony, together with his own proposed system of prison reform, generally referred to as the Mark System. Because of ~~a~~ carelessness and misunderstandings Franklin had not read the report when it was despatched, and by the same human weaknesses,

14. Tasmanian, 3.5.1839.

15. Ibid, 17.8.1838.

16. The Observer, 11.7.1845.

what was meant to be a private document, was printed in England for public consumption. The colonists were almost unanimously hostile to the report, - arguing that Maconochie had not been in the colony long enough to judge, and had no experience of the incurable evil of convicts.

Innes supported Maconochie's ideas on penal reform, although dissenting from the latter's total rejection of assignment; he agreed that the fundamental problem was 'how to punish so as to do good; to punish with a just measure of severity so as to reform the criminal and prevent the repetition of the crime.'¹⁷ He also disagreed with Maconochie's pamphlet 'On Degradation as an Element in Punishment' - Maconochie believed his Mark System did not introduce any trace of degradation, ~~and~~ ^{for} by not denying the criminal any self-respect he reformed more easily. Innes refuted this, saying it was 'vice which degrades, not the atonement for it.'¹⁸ Maconochie had been dismissed by Franklin, and this was condemned by Innes, who predicted that the publication of the report would prove to be a case of

Pan etiam Arcadia mecum si iudice certet

Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice victum.¹⁹

17. Tasmanian, 6.4.1838.

18. Ibid, 4.1.1839.

19. Ibid, 7.12.1838.

'Even if Pan (i.e. Sir John Franklin) were to strive with me with Arcadia (i.e. Van Diemen's Land) as judge, Even Pan would say that he had been overcome by Arcadia's judgment.'

It is difficult to see what else Franklin could have done, and the victim himself later acknowledged the justice of his dismissal. Maconochie had contributed ~~a substantial sum~~ to the establishment of the Tasmanian in 1837, and this may have influenced Innes in his almost solitary colonial support of the prison reform.

20

In 1841, while in England, Innes published a comprehensive pamphlet on prison discipline. ²¹ Although John West's claim that this precipitated Maconochie's appointment to Norfolk Island to give his Mark System a trial must be refuted - since Maconochie was officially appointed in 1840 - it was nevertheless a document remarkable for its humanitarian and constructive approach to the difficult and controversial subject. He gave a historical outline of transportation, its results in various colonies e.g. Bermuda, and New South Wales, and discussed the proposals of leading reformers such as Bentham, Archbishop Whatley, and of course Maconochie. Innes blamed society that few criminals were successfully rehabilitated. 'The world accustomed to judge them harshly, to see only their crime, and to see it without its palliations - to out-cast them - makes them what they become; when instead a discreet humanity might have converted many, after a first transgression, into useful and

20. Innes, F.M., Secondary Punishments.

21. West, J., op.cit., p. 291. 'The decision of parliament was precipitated by the contrivance of a friend of Captain Maconochie, Mr. Innes, who, in a pamphlet of considerable acumen and literary merit, set forth the value of his scheme.'

It is surprising to find West making mistake. It is perhaps possible that a manuscript version was used.

22

honoured members of society.' The pamphlet was also published in the
23 Penny Cyclopaedia, and printed in serial form in the Launceston Examiner.²⁴

On his return voyage to Van Diemen's Land Innes, as superintendent to the Parkhurst boys, had the opportunity to put his theories into effect. Immediately on arrival he lodged complaints against the Master of the vessel, alleging that insufficient meat and peas had been given to the boys, and that the Master had encouraged drunkenness among the passengers. The allegations were never proved, although the surgeon also preferred charges, maintaining that it would be impossible for him 'to perform his duties to the Emigrants consistently with his own personal safety in the further voyage of the "Mandarin" being left without the countenance and support which the co-operation of Mr. Innes afforded...' An inquiry found that the food deficiencies were not the fault of the Master, and had been compensated by extra allowances of bread. The Master was duly acquitted, much to the probably justifiable annoyance of Innes, who in a correspondence lasting some months demanded to see a copy of the evidence - which was refused; whereupon Innes retracted some and renewed other statements he had made - all of which only added to the
25 general confusion and misunderstanding of all the parties involved.

Innes had taken a Parkhurst boy, John Morgan, after the latter had absconded from his first master. But he was forced to admit his defeat

22. Quoted by West, op.cit., footnote pp. 291-2.

23. Vol. 25.

24. Launceston Examiner, 21.4.1845.

25. C.S.O. 8/167/2126.

and recommend to Turnbull (Colonial Secretary) that the boy be sent to Point Puer, claiming the lad to be dishonest, ungrateful and to have
26
'a spirit of perpetual discontent and quarrelsomeness.'

The initial stages of Lord Stanley's probation scheme had commenced under Franklin with the abolition of assignment. Innes never at any time recommended an immediate halt to transportation, but rather a gradual cessation. 'We are not the opponents of transportation, nor do we join with any in desiring the immediate abolishment of Assignment; there are consequences involving many interests, and must be gradually
27
and cautiously brought about.' He held that the assignment system had been economically sound. 'The strength of the former system lay in the harmony of its parts - land of easy acquisition, labour regulated in value by the moderate intromission of convicts, the Government a
28
customer, not a competitor.' Like the majority of the colonists Innes could see no improvement for either colonist or convict under the probation system.

Yet he did not censure Stanley altogether, for he saw the merit of his proposals for the management of female convicts, and printed an unpublished despatch of 1842, which advocated the establishment of a new penitentiary for these unfortunates, and the hulk 'Anson' as a

26. C.S.O. 8/167/2126.

27. Tasmanian, 3.8.1838.

28. The Observer, 18.7.1845.

temporary substitute. Innes praised the Anson system, but believed it inevitable that many 'Anson women' were convicted. Although only respectable people could obtain a servant from the Anson, if the convict did not suit, she was returned to the Government's Brickfields Factory - and from here anyone could have any convict. Innes thought that Stanley's female system would have worked more satisfactorily if he had sent out as overseer 'someone who sympathized in his desire for the re-
29
formation of female prisoners.'

But since the 'mementoes of British kindness continue to arrive
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with every wind,' the day for self-government was seen by Innes to be postponed with each contingent. Regretfully he acknowledged that 'The extinction of the present Convict System appears to us an essential preliminary - not that we should complain of a moderate intromission of
31
prisoners, or deem their presence incompatible with general freedom.'

He was never at any time an ardent Anti-Transportationist. While co-editor of the Chronicle he suggested that colonists would be wiser to wait until they had a free legislature to effect the complete cessation
32
of transportation. But submitting to public opinion and pressure he did add his name to an anti-transportation petition addressed to Denison.

29. The Observer, 4.7.1845.

30. Ibid, 12.12.1845.

31. Ibid, 12.12.1845.

32. Cornwall Chronicle, 10.8.1850.

Although not a teetotaler Innes abhorred drunkenness and in 1839, after the distilleries debates of the previous year, provided the Governor with a detailed return concerning drunks, bond and free, licensed and unlicensed hotels and opposing any further increase in the number of colonial distilleries.³³ In the 1838 discussions he expressed his 'utter loss to conceive the grounds of a measure ... financially unwise and inconsistent with the moral interests of our mixed community, as well as being at variance with the principles of sound and established commercial science.'³⁴ However, Innes thought the Council's prohibition of colonial distilleries wrong, because it had encouraged men to invest their money in these enterprises. As a solution he suggested compensation to colonial distillers and suspended trade, or alternatively, since the colonial revenue had suffered from the encouragement given to local distillation, that temporary duties should operate, 'which would give the local produce no advantage over the foreign.'³⁵ In 1846 Innes asserted that hotel licences 'should only be granted when a certain number of respectable householders in a district testify that a house is required' since 'public houses have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished.'³⁶

Innes took a great interest in the economic conditions of the colony and urged the government to put more time, money and energy into agriculture,

33. C.S.O. 5/195/4687.

34. Tasmanian, 26.10.1838.

35. Ibid, 9.4.1838.

36. The Observer, 27.2.1846.

because food was a basic necessity for society, and there could be 'no risk with appropriate collateral circumstances of its amply remunerating those who may regard it as a permanent source of accumulating capital.'

37

One of these 'collateral circumstances' was transport, and some years later Innes printed a long article, complete with estimates, on roads, both main and branch, which should be completed as soon as possible in the interests of colonial economy. There were to be tolls for ^{each} main roads 'to which no-one would object, if it were in a perfect state, and then tolls might be so arranged as to bear a portion of the expenditure for works, as well as to provide for the continued repair of the road.'

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He then turned to irrigation, and taking Major Henry Cotton as his guide, proceeded to calculate that, with convict labour the average nett revenue from 110,000 acres, with a water rental of 3/- per acre, would be £9,188. But he admitted that this was 'supposing a very low rental, and applied to but a small portion of the land capable of advantageous irrigation.'

39

The economic slump of the forties had provoked Innes to urge farmers to calculate their returns over a number of years rather than annually, and to avoid speculation with its resultant price variations. He advocated capitalising on the crop failures in Europe, and supported

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37. Tasmanian, 17.5.1839.

38. The Observer, 27.1.1846.

39. Ibid., 27.1.1846.

40. Ibid., 3.3.1846.

41. Ibid., 2.9.1845.

Governor Wilmot's despatch asking for the abolition of duty on colonial grain - which was rejected. A disciple of Adam Smith and Huskisson, Innes wanted American whalers relieved of all duties except wharfage and store charges when they put in to bond their catch prior to transshipment to America.⁴² Always looking for potential markets, he enthusiastically supported the proposed horsetrade with India, which was unsuccessfully attempted in 1850.⁴³

Innes deplored public hangings and the large crowds that were attracted to such spectacles - for which he blamed the convict element of the population, 'the mind is forced as we may say by habit, from viewing things in their proper light.'⁴⁴ In 1850 he cynically asked 'whether the object of publicity in respect to executions is to alarm those who are in the hands of justice, condemned by it, and about to suffer from them, - or not rather to alarm those who are liable to be tempted and are perhaps disposed to commit crime, but have not yet done so?'⁴⁵ In connection with crime and the degree of responsibility in the insane, Innes, quoting contemporary authorities such as Dr. Combe

42. Ibid, 26.12.1845. '... the ports of our colonies should be universally free, relieved from every charge which might discourage intercourse and contract adventure.'

43. Ibid, 3.10.1845.

44. Ibid, 2.10.1845.

45. Cornwall Chronicle, 17.4.1850.

and Dr. Ray, stressed the importance of defining the correct principles for determining legal insanity. He considered this to be especially significant 'in a community like ours, in which we have not only much crime, but we are persuaded much that is the fruit of mental weakness or derangement.'⁴⁶

Evan at this stage of his career, Innes adopted a conservative attitude to constitutional issues. He perceived the futility of a mere numerical alteration to the Legislative Council in 1838, '... an addition to its popular strength can be of little avail, unless accompanied by initiative power in the Members.'⁴⁷ He was already 'favourable to moderate principles and constitutional franchise.'⁴⁸ These comments were provoked by the discussion of measures which were eventually incorporated in the 1842 Act for the Government of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, but was never applied to the latter colony; two thirds of the Council was to be elected, but the initiating power was still to remain with the Governor. Innes believed that 'the best anticipative of elective institutions would be the infusion of popular feeling into the Governor's private council of advice.'⁴⁹

Self-government was seen by Innes to be a mixed blessing. Even if

46. The Observer, 3.10.1845.

47. Tasmanian, 27.7.1838.

48. Ibid, 27.7.1838.

49. Ibid, 27.7.1838.

'the only condition of self-government is self-support' he pointed out
 that it would 'neither moralize the vicious, nor enrich the poor,' and
 the presence of convicts supported his belief in a limited democracy:
 'we admit the convict origin and popular character of our community may
 justify the imposition of certain restrictions on the elective franchise
 52
 ...' Innes' main concern about the approaching self-government was

that it would be too democratic. 'The principle of the right of
 numbers to predominate apart from the morale and the sound and compre-
 hensive wisdom embodied in their decision ... Fatal principle ! which
 subordinates the authority of reason and morality to that of physical
 53
 preponderance !'

He warned against ^{RUSHING} making the Australian Colonies' Government Act
 through Parliament, and pleaded that it should be considered carefully,
 especially the qualifications required for candidates and electors; there
 were 'dangers incident to young freedom which should be contemplated and
 provided against ... and the most prominent of them arise from its extrav-
 agance which dictates the peculiar need in the selection of representatives;
 of men whose ample intelligence and mature experience are a guarantee of

50. The Observer, 28.10.1845.

51. Ibid, 22.7.1845.

52. Ibid, 22.7.1845.

53. Cornwall Chronicle, 4.5.1850.

54
their moderation.' Religion too would benefit, and state aid would be 55
distributed without discrimination - indeed this government would be the
salvation of all, provided it was left in the hands of the right people,
and not to the abysmal ignorance of the hoi polloi.

54. Cornwall Chronicle, 15.6.1850.

55. Ibid, 18.5.1850.

CHAPTER III

THE LIBERAL POLITICIAN 1856-1882.

As a politician Innes continued his interest in education, becoming a member of the Education Board, the Council of Education, one of the commissioners holding an inquiry into public education, a Guardian of the Queen's Asylum for Destitute Children, and an ardent supporter of the Ragged School Association; he was also instrumental in encouraging teachers from England to emigrate to Tasmania. At the last annual meeting of the Ragged School Association that Innes attended, he said that he was 'not aware of any active movement being taken with a view to the improvement of education in which he had not born a more or less important part. They had endeavoured to form their educational system so that its highest and most liberal enactments must fall into the hands and be at the disposal of the very humblest class of the colony...'

Although Innes advocated retrenchment in almost every field, he bitterly opposed any reduction at all in matters of education. He presented a petition from the 'Masters at Hutchin's, High School and certain grammar schools' against the passing of the Scholarship Abolition Bill, and pleaded for the 'respectable middle classes' who wanted a good education for their children. - He asked if the government was 'to do

1. C.S.D., 4/102/1209.

2. C.S.D., 7/20/75.

3. The Mercury, 13.5.1882.

4. Ibid, 7.8.1864.

nothing in aid of education except what was of an eleemosynary
character ?⁵

In 1868 he urged a fixed grant for education, rather than a sum allotted annually, and blamed the uncertainty of the grant as responsible for the loss of several teachers, who had left for other colonies. He also wanted a more efficient system of inspection, and more responsibility to Parliament in the spending of government funds.⁶ He held that the local 'Boards were too apt to run into an indefinite expense, which would be remedied by vesting the powers of the Boards in one head who would be responsible to the government and to that House.'⁷ Yet 'no system of compulsory education could be effectual unless more responsibility was thrown on the local Boards,'⁸ his view being the same as with the Municipal Boards - that they could be very effective if they had definite responsibilities to the government, and the latter could decrease their grant on failure of the Boards to fulfil their obligations.

'There was no colony that did so little for itself in important items of responsibility as the Tasmanian population... Independent effort in the colony was so disproportionate to the claims made upon the general revenue, and were accumulating to such an extent that no

5. The Mercury, 30.1.1867.

6. Ibid. 11.9.1874.

7. Ibid. 24.8.1860.

8. Ibid. 24.10.1873

Treasurer would be able to cope with unless a different spirit is soon
induced in the community.⁹

Innes never encouraged denominational education, because he thought this to be impossible with the colony's sparse population. Although admitting 'denominationalities had a very strong argument in favour of their views,' he did not believe that 'religious education could be imparted.'¹⁰ He wanted 'religious truth,' ~~in~~ the Bible, taught, but not its various interpretations - these could be inculcated at home or at church, but not at school. His sincere interest in education, which he had confessed in 1838,¹¹ never faded, and even in 1880 he was still reminding parliament that it was 'to the young that their hopes of reformation must be turned.'¹²

With the cessation of transportation in 1852 there was little scope for Innes' other deep interest, prison reform. He was, however, chairman of a commission appointed to enquire into the penal institutions of Tasmania in 1874-5.¹³ The commission concluded that throughout the colony there was 'no system, strictly speaking, in operation at any of these establishments, and certainly none calculated to deter offenders by its severity, or to reform them, or to utilise their labour to the extent

9. The Mercury, 28.7.1875.

10. Ibid, 12.8.1874.

11. Tasmanian, 20.7.1838.

12. The Mercury, 28.9.1880.

13. C.S.D., 7/64/1616.

that these ends are attainable...¹⁴ Innes' old theme about the lack of responsibility by the people is echoed, for Tasmania could not, 'even if its past social conditions could be obliterated, escape from the natural liabilities of every community to supplement law and police with the prison and the house of correction.'¹⁵ In 1863 he had maintained that it was 'unquestionably the policy of every government to get as much out of prison labour as possible, and it was perfectly legitimate to.'

Innes transferred his humanitarian interest from the criminal institutions to mental institutions. He became a Commissioner of the New Norfolk Asylum and opposed the suggestion that any patients other than those suffering from some mental disability should be admitted to the asylum. As a Commissioner of some eighteen years standing he believed 'it was better to have more than one building, and more than one system of management.'¹⁷ He always supported salary increases for the superintendent, because he 'did not believe in cheap doctors or cheap lawyers...'¹⁸ In 1874 Innes wrote to Sir Henry Parkes recommending that a Dr. McCarthy, who proposed settling in New South Wales, should be given an appointment in connection with the management of

14. C.S.D. 7/64/1616.

15. The Mercury, 4.9.1863.

16. C.S.D. 4/4/24.

17. The Mercury, 21.10.1880.

18. Ibid, 16.12.1871.

With other charitable institutions Innes adopted more the attitude of charity begins at home. During the debates on the Inebriates Treatment Bill in 1873, he emphasised that institutions should be 'commenced privately and expand. It was the small amount of voluntary relief given in this colony which augmented disproportionately the burden and went to increase our difficulties.'

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He believed that 'the system of relief if left to the voluntary efforts of private individuals tended as a sort of moral police, and prevented imposition on the government.'

21

He had adopted in part the utilitarian view of the 1830's - 'in dealing with charity, they required to be very cautious that they did not stimulate that they desired to reduce...'

22

To prevent this from happening he proposed some form of 'supervision over the agencies employed to ascertain whether the individuals receiving assistance from the charitable grants were or were not wrong objects of charity.'

Therefore he sought the 'establishment of certain houses of accommodation for this class of persons, and the refusal of assistance to them unless they chose to take advantage of that accommodation.'

23

Innes frequently referred to Dr. Chalmers' opinions on government relief, which

19. Public Man of Australia, pp. 366-7.

20. The Mercury, 9.7.1873.

21. Ibid. 17.7.1873.

22. Ibid. 11.7.1873.

23. Ibid. 1.9.1875.

had been tried out in Scotland.

Innes had as journalist produced a comprehensive scheme of road development for the colony, and his political career proved that this interest was not purely theoretical. As early as 1859 he had, in a rather unscrupulous move,²⁴ pushed through a resolution for the appointment of a Minister for Lands and Works, and in the same year he had made a series of comprehensive resolutions concerning the planned development of public works - especially roads and bridges. During the 1865 debate on the Public Works Bill, he reminded the Council of this statement he had put forward as Colonial Treasurer. His recommendations included that no grants should be made for specific roads without a previous report of the Surveyor General, and that all grants should be submitted to parliament by a Commission of Lands and Public Works. Bridges were to be divided into two categories: for those in settled districts, grants worth half the cost would be allocated; in unsettled districts, the grant would be determined by the interest the government had in the lands and the bearing of works on the sale of those lands.²⁵ There were also some special cases, such as £1000 for the Entally Bridge. Innes' scheme was not adopted, but he played a more active, if not more successful, part in another system of transport - railways.

24. See Chapter I.

25. The Mercury, 19.8.1865.

In the early stages of the railway controversy Innes was undecided about the value or necessity of railways. In 1860 he had²⁶ spoken in favour of the Launceston and Western Railway, but in 1865 he could not see any point in constructing the Main Line, although the previous year he had supported this proposal provided that the government funds were 'supplemented to a certain extent by public subscription.'²⁷ He urged that the first step was to discover what reasons could be advanced in favour of the line, the estimated number of passengers and the facilities which would be available for them, and the amount of traffic likely to be obtained. Before being appointed a Commissioner,²⁸ Innes, although supporting the Launceston and Western Railway Bill, deplored the fact that the government was being asked to support such enterprises; once colonial revenue was involved, Innes became deeply suspicious of the expected benefits from the venture. He referred to the 1869 Main Line Bill as 'one of the most disastrous ever submitted to the Legislature,'²⁹ and later compared the contract to those in India. 'He read to the House an extract from the Westminster Review on the subject, and showing the responsible and onerous duty proposed

26. The Mercury, 26.9.1860.

27. Ibid., 14.9.1865.

28. 1867.

29. The Mercury, 2.10.1869.

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to devolve on the Government...'

In July 1872, after a series of financial and technical difficulties, the Government finally bought out the Launceston and Western Railway Company, but now there began the problem of railway rate. Innes maintained that there were two issues, the 'raising of the rate out of the district involved,' and the necessity for efficient repairing of the line - he believed the current expenses were 'much more than they ought to be in consequence of the unsuitable character of part of the machinery employed upon it.'

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On becoming Premier Innes proposed a rate of 1/- in the pound for the first six months until some general measure was decided upon. The landholders paid voluntarily, believing the rate would not be renewed - although Innes had not committed himself. 'The Colonial Treasurer was very guarded as he always is. He was the first, however, to say that he did not consider the burden should be a permanent one. The very vague fitness of a general railway policy was held to justify the District being relieved of its burden, and was advocated in a speech essentially vague as to the period from which this policy should date.'

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But the Ministry fell before Innes could enforce a renewed rate or any alternative, but from the opposition he maintained the following year

30. The Mercury, 18.10.1869.

31. Ibid, 16.8.1872.

32. Ibid, 21.12.1872.

that as the government 'had started their railways on the principle of local liability, it should be uniformly carried out...'³⁰

The Main line also suffered a series of vicissitudes. In 1876 the government, of which Innes was Treasurer, asked three outside engineers to report on the line. When these men announced that the line did not meet the contract stipulations, Innes informed the Company that the government would not pay the guaranteed interest, which fell due on June 30th. There were allegations of fraud and bribery by both sides, but since the Company threatened to close the line unless the government paid, the latter reluctantly allowed a small loan with interest sufficient to cover expenses. Innes, now on the Opposition, thought it should be made clear that 'while Parliament did not compromise the right of the colony, taken upon the basis of the report of the engineers who examined the line, yet that they felt it to be prudent and expedient in the Parliament to be as generous and liberal in their dealings with the company as was possible and consistent with the position the Government had taken up.'³⁴

In 1877, Innes' main concern was that 'whatever was done, care would be taken to preserve the character and good faith of the colony...'³⁵ The following year he wearily 'hoped that all unsettled questions would

33. The Mercury, 1.10.1873.

34. Ibid, 19.10.1876.

35. Ibid, 18.10.1877.

36

referred to arbitration.' Innes was beset by doubt as to the rights and wrongs of railways. Perhaps if more had been undertaken by private enterprise and less forced on the diminishing colonial treasury, he would have adopted a more liberal and enthusiastic attitude.

As a free trader, Innes supported the 1867 Intercolonial Free Trade Bill, but thought it 'would have been better to have entered first into negotiations with the other governments, and on gaining their consent to have recommended the matter to the home government before legislating upon it.'³⁷ He was also apprehensive about the advantages which the neighbouring colonies would derive from the Bill. Innes represented Tasmania at the 1873 Intercolonial Congress in Sydney,³⁸ for despite the aspersions cast on his negotiating ability, he was Tasmania's leading political advocate for Free Trade.

On the whole Innes adopted a liberal if at times somewhat utilitarian attitude, to issues concerning education, charity and transport.

36. The Mercury, 18.9.1878.

37. Ibid., 30.1.1867.

38. Ibid., 30.12.1872.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICIAN 1856-1882.

In constitutional issues Innes never pretended to be anything other than conservative or wavered from his 1850 foreboding of self-government and democracy, 'Fatal principle ! which subordinates the authority of reason and morality to that of physical preponderance !'¹ Ten years later he asserted that the franchise was 'already low enough, perhaps too low to serve the purposes intended.'² He opposed the substitution of triennial for quinquennial parliaments and felt that the effect of any extension of the franchise 'would be to infuse a large number of inferior minds into the Assembly and inevitably to lower the character of the House... It was impossible for any reflective man to be other than conservative...'. But the masterstroke was yet to come - 'he could for himself abandon every interest and every attachment, and every personal feeling mixed up in political life, if in taking leave of the Legislature he could say that he had been the means of restoring to the Colony that guarantee of intellect and moral feeling which would save it from the designs of daily changelings, who were at the beck and call of every municipal clamour.'³

1. Cornwall Chronicle, 4.5.1850.

2. The Mercury, 30.8.1860.

3. Ibid, 30.8.1860.

There was no false modesty about the Colonial Treasurer.

Innes emphasised, in 1861, that 'unless their representatives were representatives of the permanent property and high intelligence of the country, they would have no guarantee for the soundness and advance of their institutions.'⁴ In discussing the House of Assembly Extension Bill, Innes maintained that Tasmania had more representatives in proportion than the other Australian colonies and he failed to see 'any real or abstract advantage attached to a numerically large legislature.' The number of members 'should be determined by the magnitude of population, the variety of interests, the distribution of the population and the multiplicity of interests and feelings which should be reflected through the legislative.'⁵

He agreed 'to the desirability of having a larger number of members,' but again stressed the quality rather than quantity and so decided he 'could not support at the present time, any large augmentation of the number.'⁶ The colony needed 'representatives who came not as local delegates, but those who were not identified with particular local interests... What they wanted were men who had general ideas of the

4. The Mercury, 17.10.1861.

5. Ibid, 2.10.1862.

6. Ibid, 30.9.1870.

principles which should guide ⁷ legislation...

Innes was always contemptuous of public opinion, and the idea of popular pressure influencing state policy horrified him. He 'did not consider that it was the duty of a Government to grant whatever public opinion might ask if they were convinced it was not for the benefit of the country.'⁸ His electoral speech to North Launceston in 1862 expressed his continued mistrust of democracy. 'It was anticipated that old influences, interests, modes of thought, and personal ties, would operate with a counteractive or conservative tendency for a time,' but that, 'democratic extravagance and ignominious truckling to the passions of the least instructed classes of voters' were fast overturn-⁹ ing 'the natural subordination of society.' To Innes, public opinion and good government could never be compatible.

In finance, too Innes adopted a conservative approach though this was partly from his own ineptitude. The almost constant economic depression called for new constructive measures to consolidate colonial revenue, but Innes failed to supply a remedy. There were passing references to his private finances and fitness to control those of the state and after his first budget ('an excruciating and tormenting

7. The Mercury, 30.9.1870.

8. Ibid, 11.12.1871.

9. Launceston Examiner, 18.11.1862.

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jumble of figures') it was said that he had 'not the ability necessary
11
for preparing a new Tariff.'

In his 1861 electoral speech Innes had advocated retrenchment rather than any additional taxes such as a wool tax for the depressed treasury, and he also wanted the abolition of State Aid to the churches, and his financial statement for that year reflected this policy. He made no attempt to gloss over the economic distress; even the Mercury, although lamenting the general picture of gloom, praised 'the entire
12
honesty of Mr. Innes' protestations.' Innes proposed a number of increased duties, including a very unpopular stamp duty, to remedy the situation, and bitterly rejected any claims by the Catholic Church for an increased grant - it was not the 'proper time for them to make any
13
addition whatever to the expenditure of the colony.'

In January 1862, Innes introduced increased duties on some goods and an ad valorem duty of ten per cent on others, but the focal point of his 1862 budget (which he delivered in August) was the drastic reduction in civil service salaries. The civil servants and the Opposition remained singularly unimpressed with Innes' comparisons with Victoria and South Australia, 'quoting Victoria as a precedent for a similar readjustment of salaries, and South Australia as an example of

10. The Mercury, 14.10.1858.

11. Ibid, 1.9.1859.

12. Ibid, 9.9.1861.

13. Ibid, 4.10.1861.

of a very similarly situated colony adopting a lower scale of official salaries than Tasmania.¹⁴ The budget was called a 'treatise on Arithmetic,' by the Mercury, who hoped 'in the exercise of Christian charity that Mr. Innes himself had some understanding of the complicated masses of figures...'¹⁵

The Ministry fell soon afterwards and Innes entered the Legislative Council, where his conservatism in finance continued, and he managed to put through an amendment to the Tarriff resolution - 'that this House while assenting to the resolution by the Assembly, desires to place on record the assertion of the indispensability of its vote to any resolution repealing or imposing new taxation.'¹⁵ Economic conditions tended to improve in 1864, but Innes warned against any undue expenditure, even with a Treasury surplus.¹⁷ 'Although the immediate prospective finances of the colony might wear a favourable appearance he did not think that there were any circumstances in the colony at present to which they could immediately look that would justify a disregard on the part of the government of that providence and economy which was uniformly avowed that which should characterise the

14. The Mercury, 14.8.1862.

15. Ibid., 2.8.1862.

16. Ibid., 16.9.1863.

17. Ibid., 30.6.1864.

18

administration of the gentlemen who now hold office.'

Innes became Colonial Treasurer again when he formed his own Ministry in 1872. The former administration had fallen largely because of Innes' attacks on T.D. Chapman, the then Treasurer. Innes accused him of misappropriating public monies, because he believed that 'the appropriation of balances or premiums from debenture funds to the current expenditure of Government is financially unsound, and especially when it is not sanctioned by Parliament.'¹⁹ But Innes' own financial statement was termed 'a string of well-turned sentences; vox et praeterea nihil.'²⁰

Innes told Charles Leake that, 'in this colony, with its next to universal suffrage, and its community greedy for every experience which captivates fanciful minds as being calculated to divert this question to the discussion of the neighbour ox, it does appear to me that an Income and Property Tax would prove politically dangerous and financially mischievous.'²¹ In July 1873, Innes spent two and a half hours describing the steadily deteriorating financial affairs of the Colony, but 'completely failed to impress his meaning on the House.'²²

18. The Mercury, 3.9.1864.

19. Ibid, 19.8.1872.

20. Ibid, 13.12.1872.

21. F.M. Innes to Charles Leake 2.11.1872.

22. The Mercury, 2.7.1873

He proposed, or it was thought he proposed, to levy a further rate on the railway district, to retrench where possible, to continue with ad valorem duties and to 'cut off the apportionment from the sales of lands towards the formation of roads...'²³ Innes withdrew all his financial measures that the Opposition criticised excepting the railway rate, and the Ministry inevitably collapsed. From the Opposition he opposed the Income Tax Bill because it was 'a Bill to enable those who were not liable to find the means of expenditure of determining what the expenditure of the State should be, and to take the necessary funds from those who had it.'²⁴

During his last term as Treasurer in the Kennerly Administration, Innes proposed a rate on real property and a railway rate throughout the island, not just in the railway district. He also lectured the inhabitants on the little they did to help themselves in matters of finance - Innes did not believe in the welfare state. In his attitude to finance it was once said - 'He is cautious, prudent and able, and would prove a valuable member of a Ministry if holding some other portfolio²⁵ than that of Treasurer, for figures are certainly not his forte.' On some financial issues Innes did not appear to come to any decision, but still recorded his vote. As Colonial Treasurer he had been in

23. The Mercury, 31.7.1873.

24. Ibid, 18.10.1873.

25. Ibid, 4.7.1873.

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favour of Probate Duties, but he voted for the repeal of these duties, after subjecting the Council to a long speech on the value of such duties as 'a measure of relief.'

Payment of members also caused Innes some mental anguish. In 1857 he asserted that the 'Constitution they had could not be properly worked unless the legislature possessed within it at the same time at least two bodies of men capable and disposed to take office,'²⁷ and therefore it was advisable at least to pay Ministers, if not all members. He moved 'that the acceptance of responsible office without the en^mrol-ments attached to it is not agreeable to the spirit of the Constitution, and is calculated to establish a precedent most hurtful in its consequences to the public interest.'²⁸ The Mercury commented that the 'Assembly last night, by a majority of nearly two to one on the motion of Mr. Innes, declined to have a Premier gratis...'²⁹

In 1867 Innes emphasised the 'necessity of maintaining the institutions of party government, and the legislature should have the power in its respective branches to recognise those to who they might desire

26. The Mercury, 30.6.1864.

27. Ibid, 16.2.1857.

28. Ibid, 16.2.1857.

29. Ibid, 27.3.1857.

to express their appreciation.³⁰ But six years later he was opposed to payment of members because of the implied principle 'that the appropriate representative in the General Legislature must be from the localities represented...'³¹ Innes, himself was rather dependent on the paid parliamentary positions he managed to obtain - 'the many remunerative offices which this gentleman holds'³² - but although he wanted members to be paid, he was, theoretically at least, reluctant if it was to be at the expense of the quality of parliamentary candidates.

In immigration, Innes also had a conservative and rather pessimistic attitude. He had become an Immigration Commissioner in 1858,³³ but in 1867 questioned the desirability of immigration. ^{He} ~~It~~ suggested that the proposed passage money allowance to Indian immigrants (in proportion to their land purchases), should not be decided until a bill 'afforded similar facilities to other immigrants.'³⁴ But he was dubious as to any advantages the colony might gain from immigration. 'They might bring all the labour England could dispense with, all the implements of agriculture, and all the capital, but if the markets for produce were not of a paying character they would be unavailing, and the artificial

30. The Mercury, 6.2.1867.

31. Ibid, 10.10.1873.

32. Ibid, 7. 8.1868.

33. Ibid, 10. 2.1858.

34. Ibid, 8.10.1867.

stimulants contemplated by legislation would result only in disappointment to those by whom they were introduced and no permanent
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advantage to the country.'

This attitude was welcomed by few, and one editorial commented on his 'involved style, combined with a vicious habit of "mouthing",
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and a laboured attempt at magniloquence on the simplest of subjects...'

35. The Mercury, 8.10.1867.

36. Ibid, 9.10.1867.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Whether the mythical Judgment Day should eventuate or not, no human judgment of another man will be infallible. It is perhaps presumptuous, especially when young, to attempt to assess a man who believed in compromise so much that he formed an administration which, as with Chatham's, was 'utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on.'¹ If Innes ever perceived that political compromise was truly an art, the exercise of that art was beyond him. Once he wrote of Robert Peel. 'It is this indefiniteness of principle, or this absence of any fixed principle - this adjusting of measures so as not to shock too much either of the extreme parties, to which the Premier is indebted to office.'² He did not seem to glimpse the gulf in statesmanship between himself and Peel, even allowing for the lack of parliamentary sophistication in the colony. The fine distinction between independence in politics and the courage it requires, and a complete lack of political principles and the expedient touch that this necessities would appear to have been too obscure for Innes.

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1. Burke, E., American Taxation; Select Works of E. Burke, ed. E.J. Payne Vol. I., p. 145.
 2. The Observer, 12.6.1845.

In politics he never seems to have doubted his own ability to guide the colony and its finances. Public opinion was irrelevant, and, if anything, an impediment to good government. Colonial circumstances probably influenced him in his pessimistic conservatism, since local conditions fostered conservative rather than liberal attitudes. It is dubious whether Innes' ideas on politics and finance would have allowed him the contemporary importance and reputation he gained, if he had been living in a more progressive colony such as Victoria, where the economic and political situation tended to emphasise a more liberal approach. Whether Innes had sufficient liberal tendencies to have become a leading Victorian politician is debatable, but Tasmanian conditions were conducive to conservatism.

Perhaps if Innes could have been Minister for Education rather than Finance, he would have been a more successful politician. Yet even his liberal and positive attitude to education failed to make him realise the inconsistency of such a policy alongside his support for a franchise based merely on a high property qualification. He does not seem to have perceived, or possibly preferred to ignore, that if education, especially at secondary and post school level, was encouraged by the state, it would not be possible to maintain intact the restricted franchise, without protest from those whom the state had educated. Innes probably never recognised, and certainly never admitted, the dilemma he faced - he, as a conservative working to preserve the status quo, and simultaneously supporting a dynamic movement,

education, which must inevitably produce changes.

Finance, as for many, was his Achilles' heel. Being unable to manage his private affairs without public speculation it was unlikely that he should fare better with those of the state. Moreover, since his financial ability was questionable, he consciously or unconsciously used his talent for words to dissimulate his weakness - probably consciously. Consequently the former asset became a liability as in time all his oratorical displays were automatically suspected, irrespective of their subject.

For all the vacillation there was some consistency. His conservatism in constitutional matters was apparent in his journalism, his liberal attitude to education did not fade. Yet his unfaltering belief in his own financial genius and political indispensability was a direct repudiation of his 1838 comment that it was ¹⁵ 'nearly impossible that anyone individual can possess exactly the right notions on its various political and local interests.³' As a journalist Innes saw events in terms of words, and continued to do so as a politician, but whereas this was an advantage in journalism and theory, it was not so helpful in practical politics. It is probable that he never discerned the difference between the theory of journalism and the practice

3. Tasmanian. 20.4.1838.

of politics, where the words may be acted upon, and half thought out schemes attempted.

The very nature of the man increases the difficulty of assessment and the comparative absence of any definite principles tends towards a judgment of Not Proven. Intelligent but not perceptive, compromising yet undoubting of his own ability, hard working although often misunderstanding, independent and oscillating, humanitarian and self-deluding, Frederick Maitland Innes was a liberal conservative, who despite contemporary acclaim was not a great man. The old paraphrased Chinese epigram can be well applied to the life and character of Innes -

'He who lives for too many words has so much less time to think quietly of their meaning, which then becomes submerged in the music of their sound.'

APPENDIX A

Chronological Table of Ministries 1856-1882

1.11.56 - 26.2.57	-	Champ Ministry.
26. 2.57 - 25.4.57	-	Gregson Ministry.
25. 4.57 - 12.5.57	-	Weston Ministry.
		Colonial Treasurer: F.M. Innes.
12. 5.57 - 1.11.60	-	Smith Ministry.
		Colonial Treasurer: F.M. Innes.
1.11.60 - 2. 8.61	-	Weston Ministry
		Colonial Treasurer: F.M. Innes.
2. 8.61 - 20.1.63	-	Chapman Ministry.
		Colonial Treasurer: F.M. Innes.
20. 1.63 - 24.11.66	-	Whyte Ministry.
24.11.66 - 4.8.69	-	Dry Ministry.
4. 8.69 - 4.11.72	-	Wilson Ministry.
4.11.72 - 4.8.73	-	Innes Ministry. (Premier and Colonial Treasurer).
4. 8.73 - 20.7.76	-	Kennerly Ministry.
		Colonial Treasurer 13.3.75-20.7.76 - F.M. Innes.
20. 7.76 - 9.8.77	-	Reibey Ministry.
9. 8.77 - 5.3.78	-	Fysh Ministry.
5. 3.78 - 20.12.78	-	Giblin Ministry.
20.12.78 - 30.10.79	-	Crowther Ministry.
30.10.79 - 15.8.84	-	Giblin Ministry.

APPENDIX B

The colonial revenue was for twenty years controlled by three men, Thomas Chapman, Charles Meredith and Frederick Maitland Innes. Apart from Philip Fysh, who handed the appointment over to Innes during the Kennerly Administration, one of these three was Colonial Treasurer from the inception of self-government in 1856 till the resignation of Reibey in 1877.

Chapman T.D.

<u>Premier</u>	- 2. 8.61 - 20.1.63	
<u>Colonial Treasurer</u>	- 1.11.56 - 26.2.57	(Champ Ministry).
	1.11.62 - 20.1.63	(Chapman Ministry).
	24.11.66 - 4.8.69	(Dry Ministry).
	4. 8.69 - 4.11.72	(Wilson Ministry).
<u>Colonial Secretary</u>	- 4. 8.73 - 1.4.76	(Kennerly Ministry).

Financial Policy - abolition of revenue tariffs and the substitution of an Income and Property Tax.

Meredith C.

<u>Colonial Treasurer</u>	- 26. 2.57 - 25. 4.57	(Gregson Ministry).
	20. 1.63 - 24.11.56	(Whyte Ministry).
	20. 7.76 - 9. 8.77	(Reibey Ministry).
<u>Minister for Lands & Works</u>	- 4.11.72 - 4. 8.73	(Innes Ministry).
	20. 7.76 - 21. 8.76	(Reibey Ministry).

Financial Policy - proposed carriage tax, instead of an Income and Property Tax, but as it would fall on the same the big landholders, it never eventuated.

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